

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

Joseph Connelly
Director of Recreation



PARK COMMISSIONERS
Leslie Mayer
Jen Rothenberg
Shirley Canniff
Donald Vitters
Elena Bartholomew
Crissy Tarantino, Associate
Peter Hedlund, Associate

Recreation Department **Park and Recreation Commission** February 11, 2016 Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00pm for its meeting in the Senior Center Main Room on Tuesday, February 11, 2016.

Members in attendance included: Jen Rothenberg, Shirley Canniff, Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, Elena Bartholomew and Associate Members Chrissy Tarantino and Peter Hedlund. Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly was not present.

Members from the public: Magnolia Field neighbor Kat Hoy and Michelle Phelan were present. Menotomy Rocks Park neighbors Pauline Gardiner, Mustafa Varoglu, Liz Reisberg and Bing Wang were present.

Approval of Minutes – The minutes of January 12, 2016 were approved on a motion made by Ms. Canniff, seconded by Ms. Mayer. Approved 5-0. The minutes of January 26, 2016 were approved on a motion made by Ms. Canniff, seconded by Mr. Vitters. Approved 5-0.

Open Forum – N/A

Magnolia Park Final Design Review

Ms. Rothenberg invited Peter Hedlund of Hedlund Design Group and his team member, civil engineer Bill Doyle of DEI, to present the revised plans for the Magnolia Park project. Changes were made based on feedback from the Commission and neighbors of Magnolia Park following the Commission meeting on January 26, 2016.

In the revised plan the community gardens will be reduced to 52 plots for budgeting, maintenance costs, and based on feedback from community gardeners. Additional storage structures and composting receptacles were requested by gardeners. These can be added over time if needed. A bike rack was requested. The Recreation Department has a bike rack available for use at no additional purchasing cost. The commuter path from the park entrance most accessible to Alewife will be moved to the north side of the storm drainage area to deter commuters from cutting through the green space.

Mr. Doyle stated that drainage around the community garden will have raised beds, under-draining and open surface drains to keep the ground as dry as possible. The grading of the playground and basketball court will be pitched to allow drainage to flow directly to the storm water retention area.

Mr. Doyle presented the Geotechnical Report and results from the test pits dug on site. The six test areas showed that the soil is all urban fill of different types. The water tables varied, with water being close to

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the surface in some test pits and not present in others. Mr. Vitters inquired whether there would be a significant amount of additional settlement over time. Mr. Hedlund and Mr. Doyle explained that there would probably be some settlement over time but that the playground structure and basketball court foundations were being designed to limit settlement.

Ms. Phelan, a Magnolia Park neighbor, inquired about existing areas of standing water, the makeup and materials used in the storm retention area, and whether the current pump system would be used. Mr. Hedlund and Mr. Doyle answered that the area would be more esthetically pleasing with the use of river stone, boulders and grass to absorb and contain drainage along with a new area drain. The current pump system would still be used. Mr. Hedlund also stated that water from a typical storm would exit the stormwater retention area in approximately six to twelve hours or less. This would be an improvement from current drying times.

Mr. Hedlund reviewed plans for the meadow/grove area. Neighbor feedback requested more open space for visibility and supported community involvement such as bird house competitions, utility box painting and maintenance of a sledding hill.

Mr. Hedlund stated that Berliner would be the new primary playground equipment vendor working with their representative Margie Salt of Park Street Playgrounds. The structures and equipment are more non-traditional and natural looking. New equipment choices include a tree house structure, rope climbing apparatus, a ropes course, a three-bay swing set, spring riders and a mud pie table. Commission members inquired about alternative equipment that would allow more accessibility for varied ages and abilities. The Commission expressed the concern that the equipment selections appeared to be ropes focused. Mr. Hedlund stated that he would direct questions and concerns to Ms. Salt and investigate options.

Mr. Hedlund presented an updated budget analysis. The current base bid is \$389,000 plus an additional \$100,000 overhead cost bringing the total to \$489,000. Add/Alts for the project that are not included in the base bid were discussed. Some add/alts included a sand and water play pump system, steel edging of asphalt walkways, boulders and river stone for the storm retention area, plantings, signage and a community table.

Ms. Mayer asked what would be used in the storm retention area if river stone was not use. Mr. Hedlund said that granite blocks from the DPW could be used as well as shrubbery and grass, but that the riverstone ground covering was currently an add/alt. Ms. Mayer stated that some add/alts such as the river stone should be included in the base bid. Mr. Vitters agreed and stated that the add/alt for park signage for rules and regulations should be included in the base bid. Mr. Hedlund stated that the design team would look into the order of the add/alts and seeing if some items could be included in the base bid.

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Ms. Phelan and Ms. Hoy, Magnolia Park neighbors, raised questions about the community bulletin board, trash receptacles and entrance way plantings. Mr. Hedlund stated that it was in the budget to move the bulletin board, but that it would remain. Ms. Phelan suggested that some plantings be done by volunteers. Ms. Hoy, a Magnolia Park area resident, asked if a sun study had been conducted to insure shade availability. She would like to see the southernmost tree, of the three slated to be removed, to remain.

Ms. Rothenberg said that the Commission will take her request under consideration. Ms. Hoy also inquired about the position of the basketball hoop in relation to the sun, whether the path through the meadow could be kept as a natural path instead of an asphalt walkway, if there was a concrete timeline for the project, and if any of the gardening plots were going to be maintained or if they would all be new. Mr. Hedlund answered that the basketball court would have a better orientation in regard to the sun and that mulch could possibly be used for a future meadow path. Mr. Hedlund stated that the plan is to complete construction this summer, which would mean the community garden would be out of commission this season, but that the overall construction schedule would be dependent on the selected contractor. Ms. Bartholomew invited Ms. Hoy to address any further questions to Joe Connelly, Director of Arlington Recreation.

Friends of Menotomy – Off Leash Meeting Review

“Friends of Menotomy” were not present to discuss off-leash hours in the woods. During the month of January it was reported by the Animal Control officer, that there had been two off-leash citations issued in the woods and one in the field at Menotomy Rocks Park.

Ms. Wang, a Menotomy Park area resident, shared concerns regarding off-leash dogs. Off-leash dogs are coming into her yard, neighbors are unable to enjoy the park without risk, her small child is not able to play in her yard and fewer runners are using the park for fear of being chased by off-leash dogs. She also expressed how uncomfortable it was for her as a resident to enforce the rules that are being broken by dog owners. Ms. Gardner and Ms. Reisberg, also area residents, shared the same concerns. Dogs are relieving themselves in yards adjacent to the woods and owners are not cleaning up after them because the dogs are “on their own”. Mr. Varoglu stated that he observed fewer dogs as a result of enforcement. Ms. Rothenberg thanked the speakers for sharing their concerns and reiterated that the rule is no off-leash dogs are allowed in the woods.

Capital Projects – Tabled

CPA Robbins Application Review

The Commission collectively agreed that the CPA application was complete and comprehensive. Mr. Vitters explained that letters of support had come from Arlington Youth Soccer, Arlington Youth Lacrosse, Arlington Babe Ruth, Friends of Robbins Farm Park and the Robbins Farm Cooperative

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Gardens. Ms. Mayer stated that the application was due by noon on February 22, 2016, but will be submitted early. On February 22, 2016 the open process of reviewing applications will begin. They will then be presented at Town Meeting in April, 2016.

Ms. Mayer reviewed how CPA money is prioritized. A portion of the funds each year must be reserved for each; 10% Affordable Housing, 10% Open Space/Recreation and 10% for Historical. Up to 5% can be used for administration and the remaining 65% can be awarded in any of the project areas. She stated that Open Space/Recreation could receive about \$500,000 this year, if everything is just divided up evenly without respect to project need. Ms. Bartholomew inquired about laws governing equal distribution of funds and whether monies could be "banked."

The Commission members further discussed add/alternates for the Magnolia Park project. Mr. Vitters stated that Hedlund Design Group needed to be asked to present the breakdown of all aspects of the basketball court portion of the project. Ms. Mayer agreed that the budget needed to match the CDBG funding of \$75,000 to prevent an audit. Ms. Rothenberg stated she would present a list of questions to Mr. Connelly for feedback.

Ms. Canniff motioned to adjourn at 10:00pm, seconded by Ms. Batholomew. Approved 5-0.